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THE IDEA OF GOD IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT PHILOSOPHY. The Gifford Lectures delivered in the University of Aberdeen in the years 1912 and 1913. A. SETH PRINGLE-PATTISON, LL.D., D.C.L. Oxford University Press. 1917. Pp. xvi, 417. 12s. 6d.

The author is profoundly convinced that the traditional idea of God must be modified if we are to deal satisfactorily with ancient problems as they present themselves to modern knowledge in the light of current philosophy. "The traditional idea, to a large extent an inheritance of philosophy from theology, may be not unfairly described as a fusion of the primitive monarchical ideal with Aristotle's conception of the Eternal Thinker" (p. 407). Perhaps the "fusion" might be described more accurately as Neo-Platonism; at any rate, it is the aloofness which the inherited idea ascribed to God, as respects both man and the world, which is the author's chief point of attack. Beginning with Hume and Kant he finds the defect of both in the separation which each practically acknowledged between the world of mind and the world of things. From this unfortunate diremption came the division between facts and values, science and religion, knowledge and faith. Human thought tried to stand, like the angel in the Apocalypse, with one foot on the solid ground of fact and the other on the shifting sea of subjective values. Escape from this way of thinking comes by substitution of biological for mechanical categories. Indeed, the word "organic" strikes the key-note of Pringle-Pattison's book. Because man is organic with nature, the world is what it appears to be, having fashioned the human senses and brain for its own just apprehension, or more accurately for its own self-expression. Hence he says rather poetically (but to him as to Dr. Everett, "Religion is poetry believed in"), "The intelligent being is, as it were, the organ through which the universe beholds and enjoys itself" (p. 111). Accordingly secondary qualities are not merely man's reactions to an unknown and unknowable world, they are nature's revelations in man. Likewise, values or "tertiary qualities" are not purely subjective but are resident in reality. So the two themes of the first series of lectures are immanence and continuity — the organic unity of man and the world.

In the second series, the same principle is applied to the relation between God and the world, including man, which also is defined as organic in an even deeper sense. Thus by the method of restatement, a solution is found for long-standing problems. Creation means the presence of the infinite in the finite; teleology, the discovery of rationality in the world-process both in details and as a

whole; time is an aspect of eternity, and so forth. Theologically, the Incarnation is the disclosure in human terms of the inmost nature of reality; hence God is to be conceived as striving and as passible.

One is loath to criticize, but two or three suggestions may be in order, bearing principally upon method. In the Preface, the author apologizes for referring so frequently to other authors, justifying his practice by saying, "This method of construction through criticism is the one which I have instinctively followed in everything I have written." So indeed one's own thought may develope, but it does not therefore follow that it is the best method of presentation. In fact, the book proves that it is not, for too often the thread of thought is lost in the maze of controversy. Again, it may be doubted whether the writer would not have done better to be more radical in his undertaking. That the traditional idea of God needs modification is indisputable, but perhaps it needs more than modification. What is deeply demanded nowadays is a fresh start from the world as we now know it, and an approach to the idea of God unhampered by traditional methods and prepossessions. One feels that at certain points elements of the traditional idea — perhaps one might more truly say, religious feelings associated with such elements — have unduly influenced the author's thought. To take but a single instance, referring to "beings capable of spiritual response which enrich thereby the life from which they spring," he adds, "Only for and in such beings does the Absolute take on the lineaments of God" (p. 295). But this Absolute, whence comes it? Surely from the speculative tradition rather than from our world as known. If the "Absolute" of tradition and of rhetoric were dispensed with altogether, perhaps then, in Emerson's phrase, God would fire the heart with his presence.

Dr. Pringle-Pattison is an idealist according to his definition of idealism as "the interpretation of the world according to a scale of value, or, in Plato's phrase, by the idea of the Good or the Best" (p. 181). Yet in his epistemology he goes far in the direction of Neo-realism, and in his insistent emphasis upon a differentiated unity and an irreducible individuality he is at one with Personal Idealism. Possibly the most valuable contribution of his book will prove to be its suggestion of a possible combination of various tendencies of contemporary thinking.

W. W. FENN.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY.